



## In The Spirit Of Crazy Horse

At the break of dawn on July 11, 1990, 500 heavily armed Quebec Provincial Police (QPP) declared war on Native peoples in Canada by attacking a road blockade erected by Mohawks at the Kanehsatake Reserve.

The barricades had been erected four months earlier to halt the town of Oka's plan to level a pine forest and desecrate a sacred burial ground located on stolen Native land for the expansion of a golf course. Because of a strategic error on the part of the police, armed Mohawk warriors were able to successfully defend their barricade and position and force the police to retreat. To this day, in the face of various counterinsurgency tactics, armed Mohawks have been able to hold their ground while being surrounded by over 1,000 provincial police.

This special news bulletin of ARM THE SPIRIT is devoted to the Natives' struggle in Oka. Most of the information contained herein will not be news to most people in Canada who have seen most of this information covered in the media. With this in mind we have prepared a chronology of events beginning with the initial attack for those who know very little about the current situation and for those whose only source of news has been the capitalist press, such as our comrades overseas and those in prison. This chronology is by no means an extensive summary of events surrounding the siege. This is especially the case with regards to support actions which have been taken from Native communiques and the capitalist press.

International support for the Mohawk Nation territories of Akwasasne, Kahnawake and Kanehsatake has been received from throughout Canada, the US and the world. Native people throughout Quebec, British Columbia, Ontario, California, Arizona and New Mexico have expressed their solidarity through statements and the establishment of blockades in their territories. Demonstrations, lobbying, protests and marches have been held throughout Canada and the U.S. by Native, black, African, leftist, religious etc. groups, organizations and communities.

Kanehsatake is by no means, a chance incident. Over the past few years, Native struggles across Canada have intensified and there has been an increasing trend of militant action. In the fall of 1988, the Lubicon Band in Alberta (a Canadian province) declared that they no longer recognized the jurisdiction of the Canadian government over their sovereign lands. The Lubicons then erected barricades on roads that entered onto their land and prepared to defend the barricades by force, if necessary. This was the result of years of constant frustration at getting nowhere with the Alberta government in settling their land claim dispute. While negotiations had dragged along for many years, multinational companies had continued their operations on Lubicon land. The result of this was the destruction of the surrounding environment which led to the decline in the wildlife that the Lubicon were dependant upon to help feed their communities. Over a short period of time the once self-sufficient Lubicon were forced to seek government assistance thereby placing the majority of the Lubicons on welfare. As a

result other problems began to arise such as an increase in alcoholism and suicide rates. One in three Lubicons suffer from tuberculosis compared to the national average of one in 150,000 Canadians.

The Lubicon situation is not an isolated one. There are countless land claim struggles being fought by Natives in Canada. The same corporate exploitation usually takes place on their tribal lands. In Temagami, the Teme-Anishihabe have fought against logging companies who want to cut down the last of the old growth forest in the region. The Innu in Nitassinan (Quebec/Labrador region of Canada) have blockaded runways of military jets that are carrying out low level flight testing across Innu land. These jets, as part of NATO training exercises, scare off caribou that are the staple diet of the Innu. Because of the noise and frequency of the flights the Innu themselves are also suffering ill effects. In the Northern Gitskan region of British Columbia (another Canadian province) Natives have set up road blockades to fight encroaching industrialization.

The most blatant example of corporate destruction of the environment and Native communities has been the James Bay 1 project in northern Quebec. This massive hydro-electric project, completed in the 1970's, was agreed to by the James Bay Cree when it was undertaken. The results though, for the Cree, have been disastrous. By diverting rivers, building dams, etc. to produce hydro-electric power there has been wide scale environmental damage. This has included the contaminating of fish and other wildlife, the flooding of lands which has disrupted native communities and driven off wildlife that they were subsistent upon. Now the Quebec government wants to begin James Bay 2, an even larger project that will flood an unprecedented amount of land. The implications of this are staggering for the Cree who quite obviously want none of this to take place.

The source of the problems facing Native peoples stem back to colonialism. Ever since European settlers landed on this continent, Native peoples have faced a constant attack. Throughout the last four cen-



turies, Natives have been murdered, driven off their land, seen their entire way of life annihilated. All in the name of colonialist expansion which still continues today. The government of Quebec stands to make a massive profit off the James Bay 2 project which will sell hydro-electric power to the U.S. With the recent Free Trade deal the U.S. will get greater access to natural resources in Canada. With a vast majority of these resources being on Native land it is obvious that the various corporate and political interests will stop at nothing to eliminate any impediments to furthering their economic plans. This means using any means available to disrupt or destroy Native resistance.

In June of this year the Canadian government was involved in intensive negotiations with provincial governments over the Meech Lake Accord. The Accord was designed to bring Quebec into the constitution since they were the only province that did not sign it back in 1982. The predominantly French speaking Quebec had refused to become part of the constitution because it did not allow them to have

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## WEDNESDAY, JULY 11

At approximately 6:00 am, after placing snipers in trees, QPP launch a massive assault against barricades erected by Mohawks in Kanesatake in defense of their land. The early morning offensive consists of using a large front-end earth loader backed up by automatic weapon fire, stun grenades and tear gas.

Police plan backfires when "mother nature" rises up off the lake and blows tear gas shot by QPP back into their areas of visibility forcing them to retreat. In the process, one police officer is killed by what is believed to be either his own bullet or that of a colleague.

Armed Mohawks successfully defend their position and use change of wind direction advantage to commandeer front end loader and reinforce their barricades with 6 abandoned police vehicles.

The police erect a barricade 200 metres away from the Mohawk one, threatening and harassing media taking pictures and filming the now exposed face of a racist and militarist state. Armed with automatic rifles and molotov cocktails, Mohawks settle in for what appears is going to be a long siege.

To support their brothers and sisters at Oka, Mohawks on the reserve of Kahnawake block and barricade the Mercier Bridge, an important commuter link in the settler town of Chateauguay. Both blockades receive widespread support by natives in Kahnawake and Kanehsatake. The Natives state that they will continue to occupy the bridge until the state withdraws its forces and that the bridge will be blown up if any Native is killed.

Elsewhere in Canada, statements of support are sent by other Native Bands such as the one received by Chief Bernard Ominayak of the Lubicon Nation in Alberta, which in part reads ... "The Lubicon Lake Indian Nation fully supports the heroic efforts of the Mohawks of Kanesatake to defend their lands against armed invasion. As is the case with Aboriginal Nations across the country, the Mohawks of Kanesatake have been given no choice but to exercise the internally-recognized right of self defense."

Jean Ouellette, the mayor of Oka who thought he would stand in victory over the bodies of Native people on this day, goes into hiding and is under police protection.

## THURSDAY, JULY 12

By sunrise, over 100 state storm troopers descend on the municipality of Oka and the surrounding area. Police seal off all access to the area to prevent food and medical supplies from getting to Mohawks behind their barricades. Water is turned off for over 12 hours. These actions infuriate native and non-native residents angered by the state's creation of a war zone in their town(s).

The atmosphere is tense as both police and fully-armed Mohawks await the other side to make a move. In spite of this, the first negotiations between the state and Mohawks occur, albeit to no avail.

The news of yesterday's attack reaches the Canadian public via the front page of every daily paper gaining sympathy and sentiments of support for the Mohawks by a majority of Canadian citizens.

The Chief of the Assembly of First Nations says that natives "are prepared to take direct action, including cutting down power lines and destroying bridges". Other statements of support by Native nations are sent. In addition, one of many defense funds throughout Canada is established in Toronto. (See elsewhere in this bulletin to see how one can contribute.)

## FRIDAY, JULY 13

The stalemate continues as do negotiations between the province and Natives, again to no avail. The police counterinsurgency tactic of blocking food and medical supplies is denounced by the Canadian Human Rights Commission. In an effort to counter state tactics, the Band council of the Kanesatake reserve set up a foodbank calling for outside donations.

To almost confirm everyone's suspicion that the police are responsible for the death of one of their fellow slime, police refuse to release information that would help to determine who is responsible for the fatal shooting.

## SATURDAY, JULY 14

After six hours of negotiations between provincial Indian Affairs Minister John Ciaccia and the Mohawks, a tentative deal is struck: significantly reduce police presence and the blockade on the Mercier Bridge will end.

A solidarity demonstration takes place here in Toronto as protestors of a racist exhibit at the Royal Ontario Museum join with natives in an illegal march downtown, blocking traffic at major intersections.

A demonstration by residents of Chateauguay against the blocking of the Mercier Bridge takes on racist overtones and demonstrators storm police barricades in an attempt to attack the Mohawks barricade.

The Oneida Nation Council of Chiefs send a letter to Federal Minister of Indian Affairs stating that "the Council supports the Mohawks of Kanehsatake in their right to exercise their unrelinquished jurisdiction over their land and their just right to protect the land."

## SUNDAY, JULY 15

Contradictory to the agreement reached on Saturday, the police show no signs of reducing their massive presence and the deal collapses.

The Penticton Indian Band in British Columbia issues a press release committing themselves to direct action by establishing a series of road blockades to demonstrate their solidarity and support for the Kanesatake people of the Mohawks Nation in Oka, Quebec.

Police are still not allowing food across barricades although it is being smuggled in clandestinely. The Canadian Alliance in Solidarity with Native Peoples starts a foodbank to gather supplies for the Mohawks in Oka. Poor weather conditions causes the Festival for Survivors of Assault in Toronto to be cancelled. Organizers of the event head to Oka with two vanloads of food which was to feed Festival participants.

## MONDAY, JULY 16

RCMP are moved in to assist the Quebec Provincial Police.

Quebec Provincial Police surrounding Kanehsatake force Mohawk negotiators to wait four hours which is considered an extreme personal affront that can bring dire misfortune to the desecrators and their families.



Doctors, medicine and food are not being allowed into Kanesatake. Residents requiring treatment are dealing with increasing hardships as they face lengthy hassles by police when they leave for urgent medical help and upon their return. The Red Cross is now allowed to bring in food and supplies and some food continues to be smuggled in clandestinely as well.

Some residents of Chateauguay attempt to join together and send food to Kahnawake amidst threats from other citizens to smash store windows, etc.

## TUESDAY, JULY 17

At 6:00 am police allow emergency personnel behind barricades to a man injured in a construction accident on July 10. Up until this date access of emergency personnel had been denied by police as part of their attack on the Oka people. Access was only allowed when the man's condition had reached dangerous levels.

Canadian armed forces send a contingency force to Lange Pointe military base in Montreal where armed personnel carriers, anti-tank weapons and military trucks are on standby for what is believed to be preparation for a possible large-scale attack on the Mercier Bridge or Oka barricades.

Some Chateauguay residents, who apparently see the bridge blockade as too much of an imposition and the struggle of native Indians as subordinate to their convenience attack police barricades at the base of the bridge. In a blatant display of racism effigies of Mohawks are burned and a Black man passing by is attacked. Rather than defend the man from his assailants, the police brutally attack and arrest him.

In Ottawa over 400 march in support of Mohawks.

Mohawks at Akwesasne in Quebec send a message of solidarity stating that the tribe will "do everything in its power to protect the people of the Mohawks Nation".

## WEDNESDAY, JULY 18

Mohawks blockading the Mercier Bridge reinforce their barricades using cars, dirt and debris. At the base of the bridge police confront Chateauguay residents angered by the bridge's closing.

In British Columbia, Solicitor General Russ Fraser threatens to send in RCMP to dismantle a solidarity blockade erected earlier in the week by natives.

75 residents of the Rousseau River Reserve in southern Manitoba demonstrate their solidarity by erecting a blockade on a provincial highway.

Native Chiefs from across Canada begin to gather in Kahnawake for an open summit of First Nation Leaders.

The American Indian Movement and the American Indian Support Committee issue their solidarity with the Mohawks.

Angry demonstrators gather in Queen's Park, Toronto to condemn



the Canadian government for its inaction in dealing with the Mohawk demands. Subsequent to the demonstration, activists begin to organize bus rides to Oka for a Justice Watch which they hope will curtail police violence against Mohawks.

#### THURSDAY, JULY 19

The Federal government states it will refuse to negotiate further until the Mohawks put down their arms. Mohawks flatly refuse the government's demand, stating that the barricades will remain erect until the state deals with their claims.

People gather in front of the Ministry of Indian Affairs building in Toronto to show support for Mohawks and to protest the federal government's refusal to deal with

#### FRIDAY, JULY 20

Native chiefs head back home after adopting a nine-point resolution as follows:

- 1) All police be withdrawn from Kahnawake and Kanehsatake and Prime Minister Brian Mulroney reconvene parliament immediately to deal with the national crisis.
- 2) The federal and Quebec governments guarantee immunity from prosecution for all Mohawk actions during the events at both locations.
- 3) The United Nations appoint an international commission to investigate the abuses and violations of civil, political and constitutional rights of the Kanehsatake and Kahnawake Mohawks.
- 4) The world community condemn the government of Canada for its neglect of native people.
- 5) Other countries impose economic sanctions against Canada until the conflict is settled.

The Chiefs also:

- reaffirmed the inherent right of native people to self-determination and jurisdiction over their land;
- voiced support for the Mohawks in their effort to negotiate a peaceful settlement of the current dispute;
- demanded that Mulroney personally enter the talks;
- promised to take "appropriate and reasonable actions" of an unspecified nature in support of the Mohawks in the current dispute.

Demonstrations continue in Chateaugay as 700 people block traffic in their own town. The burning of Mohawk effigies continues and riot cops are again called in.

A 24-hour vigil is held in Toronto with local supporters.

#### SATURDAY, JULY 21

The police highjack talks between the province and natives by refusing to allow six key negotiators behind the barricades.

As another protest takes place in Chateaugay, Mohawks on the Mercier Bridge ignite a row of tires creating a wall of fire four lanes wide.

Food supplies are now running dangerously low.

#### SUNDAY, JULY 22

As food supplies continue to deplete, the police refuse to allow the Red Cross behind barricades with supplies.

Across Canada solidarity is widespread: -150 people demonstrate in downtown Toronto -another small demonstration takes place in suburban Toronto

-over 1000 people demonstrate in Winnipeg, Manitoba  
-over 150 people demonstrate in Oka  
-over 200 Micmacs march and block traffic in Nova Scotia

-2 native prisoners at the at the Headingley Institution in Winnipeg begin a solidarity hungerstrike  
-over 70 people demonstrate in Edmonton, Alberta.

#### MONDAY, JULY 23

The Red Cross is finally let in with food supplies.

A statement released by Six Nations states that individual brought food in last Thursday and found people who had not eaten for days.

In a blatant attempt to discredit Mohawk people, Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs, Harry Swain, makes statements describing the Warrior Society as a criminal organization acting against the will of the Mohawk people.

The Quebec Government continues to refuse to negotiate behind Mohawk barricades or with Mohawks from Akwasasne. A Mohawk spokesperson responds that it is a Mohawk issue and it's irrelevant where the Mohawks come from.

As the Mohawk Nation is not a member of the United Nations, an earlier request to send in UN peacekeepers is denied.

#### TUESDAY, JULY 24

The Quebec Human Rights Commission states that Quebec Provincial Police are ignoring the province's charter of rights as investigators who visit the reserve hear stories of harassment and mistreatment by police and physical abuse of illegally-detained people. As well, individuals who look like Mohawks receive much harsher treatment at the barricades.

Although the Red Cross is allowed to bring in food, bureaucratic delays are lengthy and those behind the barricades are relying heavily on supplies smuggled in clandestinely. The possibility of another police attack becomes very real when Natives learn from sources that it is being discussed by the government (see communique).

#### WEDNESDAY, JULY 25

The Mohawk Nation receives an anonymous fax message which purports to be a statement from the Algonquin Indian Association (a non-existent group) condemning the actions of the Mohawks of Kanehsatake and Kanawake in their land claim struggle. The statement is later revealed to be a deliberate attempt by the Canadian government to discredit and disrupt Native nation relations. An investigation reveals that the origin of the fax is from the government's Department of Indian Affairs.

#### THURSDAY, JULY 26

The Grand Chief of the Algonquin Council of Western Quebec (a legitimate group) sends a letter of support to the Mohawk people in which states that they "...support the endeavors of the Mohawk Nation in this present struggle in the name of us all."

#### FRIDAY, JULY 27

The government, in an obvious attempt to disarm the Mohawks, declares that it will reduce the police presence and acquire the disputed land for the natives "enjoyment and benefit" on the condition that the Mohawks turn in all their weapons and dismantle the barricades.

Across Canada, solidarity actions by Natives continue:

On Vancouver Island, natives at Campbell river announce they will begin to block commercial vehicles and tourists on the island highway. The blockade is to be erected in support of the Mohawks and to demonstrate their anger after a driver rammed into signs at an information picket they had organized.

In a solidarity action, several Native bands in Manitoba blockade a 4 lane highway. This effectively cuts access to a concentrated strip of beaches and campground sites.

At Brokenhead Reserve, north of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Natives blockade a highway in support of the Mohawks.

300 Natives march through downtown Halifax in a demonstration of solidarity.

#### SATURDAY, JULY 28

The Mohawks announce that they won't consider the government proposal, made on Friday, to disarm and dismantle the barricades.

In New Brunswick, Micmacs blockade a highway that runs through their reserve. They state that the blockades, originally erected in solidarity with the Mohawks, will not be dismantled until their land claims and other aboriginal rights issues are resolved. The blockade is constructed of overturned vehicles and logs and it cuts off access to the area's most popular beach.

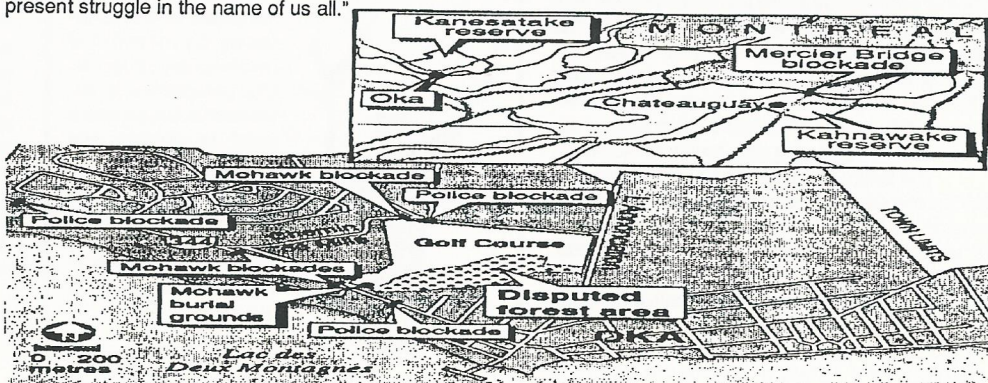
#### SUNDAY, JULY 29

A demonstration organized by the Assembly Of First Nations draws over 2500 people to Oka to show their solidarity. Police harassment of Natives and non-Native supporters continues.

In Saskatchewan, Natives (Metis) blockade the entrance to Batoche National Historical Park (Batoche was the site of a battle between the Metis and Canadian troops in the 19th century when the Metis went to war against Canada during the Metis Rebellion) in solidarity with the Mohawks and to fight for their own land claim struggle and for self-determination.

Members of the Caldwell First Nation band arrive in Point Pelee after a 6 day walk (114 miles) from London, Ontario. They organized the walk to help raise money for a Chippewa land claim and to show support for the Mohawks.

As we send this out, the standoff between the Mohawk Nation and the police continues.....





## COMMUNIQUE

We have received an unconfirmed report from a very reliable source, that the RCMP is presently making plans to attack Kanesatake. They expect and are prepared to accept heavy casualties from both Native and non-Native peoples as well as their own personnel. They have, in the last day, began to recommend that residents of Oka evacuate their homes. There are well over 500 women, children and men in the encampment at Kanesatake. There are another 1,000 or more persons just outside of the encampment, but inside the S.Q. (Quebec police - ed.) barricades.

We did not fire upon people, the only violence has thus far come at the hands of the S.Q. We seek and want a peaceful resolution to this crisis. A bloodbath may be imminent. We call upon all peoples of the world, especially Canada, to demand that Brian Mulroney reign in the RCMP and prevent a needless massacre.

It is we who are peaceful and wish to negotiate on a nation-to-nation basis. Only the intervention of the world community can prevent hundreds, if not thousands, of casualties.

**DEMAND THIS MADNESS BE STOPPED BEFORE IT STARTS.**

Contact: Mohawk Nation  
Kahnawake - Tel: 514/68-4750  
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Kanehsatake - Tel: 514/479-8355

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"sovereign" status within Canada nor did it recognize Quebec as being a "distinct society". The Accord was an attempt to placate the Quebec government by recognizing this in the constitution. But when it came to Native peoples in Canada there was no mention of "distinct societies" or sovereignty. Because there was a deadline that was set for the signing of the Accord and as well the other 9 (predominantly English speaking) provinces had to give approval, there was an urgency on the part of the Canadian government to push it through. This was not to happen. The refusal of the Canadian government to recognize Native sovereignty prompted Elijah Harper, a Cree member of the Manitoba legislature, to use stalling tactics in provincial parliament to make sure that the Manitoba government could not give assent to the Accord on time. This played a major role in the failure of the Accord and was a defeat for the Quebec government who needed the Accord so that they would be able to carry out their political and economic designs unhindered.

Tensions between the various settler governments and the Mohawks had been on the increase in the past months. On the Mohawk territory of Geni-en-keh in upper state New York (just east of Akwesasne) there has been a confrontation with N.Y. state police when they attempted to come into the territory after gunshots from the Geni-en-keh land hit a Vermont National Guard helicopter forcing it into an emergency landing. The Mohawks refused to allow the cops to enter their territory to investigate the shooting, saying that they would undertake the investigation themselves. This turned into a stand-off when both sides threw up barricades.

It was fighting between Mohawks over disputed gambling casinos on the Akwesasne/St. Regis territory that saw various police and military forces from the U.S. and Canada invade on May 1st of this year. The official justification for the massive armed intervention was to stop the violence between the two opposing sides that had left two men dead. What it has allowed, is an opportunity for governments on both sides of the border to exert more control over Native territories.

The failure of the Meech Lake Accord was a setback for the Quebec government and a victory for Native peoples. For the Mohawks it's the reason for the armed attack at Kanesatake by the Quebec police. Throughout the history of colonialism on this continent there has always been resistance by native peoples. The result for them has been near-genocide which is still being practiced by the various settler governments. The possibility of a violent assault by the Canadian

state is strong. Governments have never backed away from violently crushing militant resistance. One only has to remember the struggles of the Native peoples at Pine Ridge, South Dakota. The FBI and various state and private police forces waged a campaign of violence against Natives and in particular the American Indian Movement (AIM). AIM was a group that fought strongly for the right of sovereign Native nations and vigorously defended its people. Because of their militant resistance they became the target of the FBI's COINTELPRO operation which was a counterinsurgency program designed to crush militant groups and movements such as AIM and the Black Panther Party. The COINTELPRO operation was carried out a number of ways including; the spreading of disinformation, using armed gangs (the GOON's) who terrorized communities, agent provocateurs, frame-ups and assassinations. Between 1972 and 1976 over 70 AIM activists were murdered and countless others framed by the FBI. (To this day Leonard Peltier is still in prison for the murder of two FBI agents that he did not commit.)

In 1973 the FBI turned Pine Ridge into a warzone when a siege took place for over two months between AIM activists and Natives and the FBI and other police forces.

As we write this, the siege at Kanehsatake and the blockade at Kahnawake continues. The threat of an armed attack by the police or the military is very real. For us, support is vital and the building of international solidarity is extremely important. We urge all comrades to undertake any necessary actions to support the resistance of the Mohawks and their struggle for self-determination and land.

**SOLIDARITY IS A WEAPON!**



Arm The Spirit is an information collective focusing on militant and revolutionary struggles. Our perspective is autonomous but we see a need to discuss and analyse all forms of left resistance in order to contribute to a revolutionary process. We welcome and encourage others to join us in our work.

La Lucha Continua!



## Defense Fund For Mohawk Sovereignty

In the wake of police attacks on the people of Kanehsatake, sovereign Mohawks territories need our assistance in the defense of their territory.

One of the things we can do is send material aid right away to help them buy supplies like food, medical supplies, fuel, etc. Even should the blockade be lifted, funds will still be needed to help rebuild and further the struggle for aboriginal title to the Kanehsatake lands. With this in mind, solidarity activists in Toronto have put together a defense fund with the goal of sending immediate assistance to the people there. Money that is collected is then relayed to the Mohawk people through activists from the Leonard Peltier Canadian Defense Committee.

Your immediate contribution is essential. A local collectively-run credit union has set up an account and funds to support the First Nations of Canada in their struggle for sovereignty in this emergency situation can be sent to:

**Defense Fund for Mohawk Sovereignty**  
c/o Bread & Roses Credit Union  
348 Danforth Ave., Suite 211  
Toronto, Ontario, M4K 1N8  
Canada tel: (416) 461 7882

Subscriptions for this bulletin are \$8.00 for 10 issues. We will also be publishing a magazine that will expand upon what we cover in the bulletin. At this moment we have no subscription rate for it but we hope to publish it at least twice a year. The bulletin will come out at least 10 times a year on a near monthly basis. We are also in the process of setting up a small mailorder literature service. Please send \$1 for the mailorder list. We accept cash (conceal it well) or money orders but no cheques. If sending a money order please do not put 'Arm The Spirit' just leave it blank. We look forward to hearing from you.

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